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Sent: Wednesday, March 15, 2006 8:01 PM

To: MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov

Subject: MLPAComments: Recreation fishing limits and no take areas for free divers

In reviewing the proposals for the Central Coast Region of the MLPA Initiative I am very concerned that the recreational sport of free dive spearfishing is not identified other than not allowing spear fishing contests. I dislike such contests and support a restriction on this type of activity; however, the actual sport of free dive (breath hold)spear fishing is one that has an extremely limited impact on the resource due to the difficulty of the sport.

The primary target species for myself and other free divers in the Santa Cruz area consists of halibut and white seabass. I personally do not take rock fish (including ling cod). Both halibut and white seabass already have stringent take limits and due to the difficulty of taking them while breath hold diving make even reaching a daily limit nearly impossible. The free divers that I am familiar with in the Santa Cruz County area are extremely careful in their take, adhere! to all Fish and Game Regulations and support marine conservation.

Prior to instituting a total ban on recreational take of fin fish while free diving I would think that take reductions should be considered. What I know of the science of the depletion of the white seabass fishing stocks for example has primarily been due to by-catch of white seabass by anchovy and sardine netters close to shore in the summer (a number of whom have either been cited for or suspected of illegal sales of white seabass to local markets).

In my opinion, the impact of free divers from shore on the fish stocks within the proposed Central Coast Region is extremely limited and is a recreational sport that should be allowed to continue.

Thank you for your attention,

Alex K. Peabody